

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (withdrawn) An isolated antibody which specifically binds purified early conception factor.
2. (withdrawn) An isolated antibody which specifically binds purified early conception factor which has a molecular weight of approximately 200,000.
3. (withdrawn) An isolated antibody of claim 2 wherein the early conception factor is from a species selected from the group consisting of cow, cat, dog, horse, human, sheep, and pig.
4. (withdrawn) An antibody according to any one of claims 1, 2 or 3 wherein said antibody is selected from the group consisting of polyclonal, monoclonal, humanized, fully human, or chimeric antibodies.
5. (currently amended) A method for detecting conception in an animal comprising:
 - a) contacting a fluid or tissue sample from the animal with an antibody that specifically binds early conception factor under conditions whereby the antibody can bind to early conception factor; and
 - b) detecting binding of the antibody to the sample, wherein detecting the binding indicates the presence of early conception factor in the sample and conception in detecting the presence of early conception factor in a body fluid of the animal.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the body fluid is blood, plasma or serum.
7. (previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the body fluid is urine.
8. (previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the body fluid is milk.
9. (withdrawn) A method for determining the absence of conception in a cow within the first twelve hours of gestation comprising determining the presence or absence of early conception factor, the absence of early conception factor indicating the absence of conception.
10. (withdrawn) A method for determining the absence of conception in a cow within the first twenty-four hours of gestation comprising determining the presence or absence of early conception factor, the absence of early conception factor indicating the absence of conception.
11. (currently amended) A method for detecting early conception factor in an animal comprising the steps of:
- a. ~~collecting a sample from the animal;~~
 - b a. contacting the a sample from the animal with ~~anti-(early conception factor)~~ antibodies an antibody that specifically binds early conception factor under conditions whereby the ~~antibodies~~ antibody can bind early conception factor protein present in the sample; and
 - e b. detecting ~~the antibody-early conception factor complexes~~ binding of the antibody to early conception factor, wherein the binding indicates the presence of early conception factor in the animal.
12. (currently amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the sample is selected from the group consisting of blood, plasma, serum, urine and milk.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the ~~anti-early conception factor~~ antibody that specifically binds early conception factor is conjugated to a detectable moiety, and wherein after step b), the sample is washed, and the ~~antibody-early conception factor complex~~ antibody bound to early conception factor is detected by adding a substrate or inducer, and ~~monitoring detectable changes in the receptacle~~ changes in the substrate or inducer are monitored.

14. (currently amended) The method of claim 13 wherein the ~~anti-(early conception factor)~~ antibodies are antibody that specifically binds early conception factor is conjugated to a moiety selected from the group consisting of alkaline phosphatase, horseradish peroxidase, colloidal gold, and urease.

15. (withdrawn) An apparatus for detecting early conception factor in a fluid containing a sample from a subject, comprising:

- a. a body portion; and
- b. a support, having thereon an antibody to early conception factor, in contact with the body portion.


16. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the support comprises a material that wicks a fluid.

17. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the antibody is conjugated to a detectable moiety.

18. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the substrate has both a monoclonal and a polyclonal anti-(early conception factor) antibody thereon.

19. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the monoclonal and polyclonal anti-(early conception factor) antibodies are spatially separated on the support.

20. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the polyclonal antibody is localized in a band, wherein the band is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the support.

 21. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising a means on the body portion for directing a fluid to the support.

22. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the means on the body portion for directing a fluid to the support, directs the fluid to a location on the support whereon the monoclonal antibody is located, whereby the sample contacts the monoclonal antibody and the support wicks the monoclonal antibody and the fluid into contact with the band containing the polyclonal antibody.

23. (new) The method of claim 5, wherein the molecular weight of early conception factor is from about 190,000 daltons to about 205,000 daltons.

24. (new) The method of claim 11, wherein the molecular weight of early conception factor is from about 190,000 daltons to about 205,000 daltons.

25. (new) A method for detecting conception in an animal comprising:

a) contacting a fluid or tissue sample from the animal with an antibody that specifically binds early conception factor under conditions whereby the antibody can bind to early

conception factor, and wherein early conception factor has a molecular weight from about 190,000 daltons to about 205,000 daltons; and

b) detecting binding of the antibody to the sample, wherein detecting the binding indicates the presence of early conception factor in the sample and conception in the animal.

26. (new) A method for detecting early conception factor in an animal comprising the steps of:

a) contacting a sample from the animal with an antibody that specifically binds early conception factor under conditions whereby the antibody can bind early conception factor protein present in the sample and wherein early conception factor has a molecular weight from about 190,000 daltons to about 205,000 daltons; and

b) detecting binding of the antibody to early conception factor, wherein the binding indicates the presence of early conception factor in the animal.
